



Chiropractic and Back Pain



Very few of us will get through life without experiencing back pain. Your lower back is especially subject to injury because it supports the weight of your body. Your back is a well-designed structure made up of bone, muscles, nerves and other soft tissues. You rely on your back to be the workhorse of the body — its function is essential for nearly every move you make. Because of this, the back can be particularly vulnerable to injury and back pain can be disabling.

Four out of five adults have at least one bout of back pain sometime during life. In fact, back pain is one of the most common reasons for health care visits and missed work.

On the bright side, you can prevent most back pain. Simple home treatment and proper body mechanics will often heal your back within a few weeks and keep it functional for the long haul.

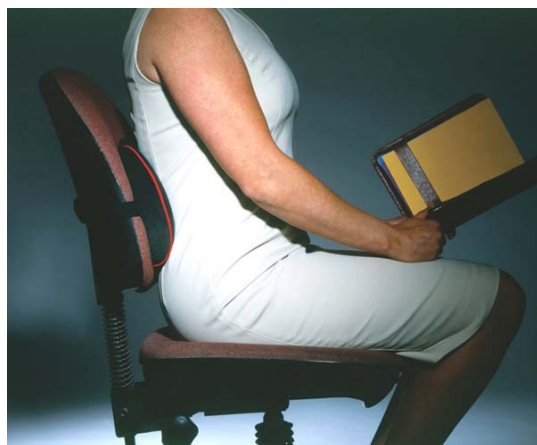
What can a chiropractor do about back pain?

Chiropractic treatment is based on the concept that restricted movement in the spine may lead to pain and reduced function. Spinal adjustment (manipulation) is one form of therapy chiropractors use to treat restricted spinal mobility. The goal is to restore spinal movement and, as a result, improve function and decrease back pain.

During an adjustment, chiropractors use their hands to apply a controlled, sudden force to a joint. This maneuver often results in a cracking sound made by separation of the joint surfaces — not, as many people think, by "cracking joints." Although this sound is common, it doesn't have to occur for the treatment to be successful.



Although back pain becomes more common as we age, most back problems are due to strain or overuse. Chiropractors may also use massage and stretching to relax muscles that are shortened or in spasm. Many use additional treatments as well, such as ultrasound, electrical muscle stimulation and exercises.



There are some things you can do daily to help prevent this problem.

When sitting, proper body mechanics are a must. Particularly now that so many people are in front of a computer for long periods of time, sitting properly becomes even more important.

You can begin by not sitting in one position for long periods of time. Get up and walk around or change positions frequently.

Some chairs do not provide proper support. Use a small pillow or roll up a towel and place it behind your lower back to give you more support.

When you are driving, pull your seat up so you are not straining or stretching to reach the pedals or the steering wheel. Driving down the road leaning back with your arm stretched out across the back of the front seat is not proper seating and will put unnecessary stress on your back and neck.

When sleeping, many chiropractors recommend sleeping on your side in a fetal position with a pillow tucked between your knees. If you like to sleep on your back, a pillow under your knees will help relieve much of the strain.

The most common way to injure your back, however, is improper lifting.

Keep your back straight when you reach down to pick something up. Do not bend forward from the waist. This is the quickest way to injure your back. Bend your knees and squat down to pick up objects, but make sure to keep your back straight and lift with your arms and legs.

Always keep objects you pick up close to your body. It doesn't matter if they are light or heavy. When you are holding a heavy object, do not turn your back. Turn your feet and your entire body together.



Talk to your doctor and have him or her recommend some stretching exercises to help strengthen your back. Strengthening your abdominal muscles is important as well. Weak abdominal muscles put a strain on your back.

One of the best exercises you can do to help stretch your back is the backward bend. Stand straight with your feet about shoulder width apart. Place your hands in the small of your back and gently bend backward. Make sure you keep your legs straight and only bend at the waist. Hold this stretch for one to two seconds. Do five or six repetitions and do this daily or anytime you feel pain in your lower back.

You may not be able to totally eliminate back pain, but by taking these precautions and exercising to strengthen your back and abdominal muscles, you can go a long way towards keeping your back pain free.

Call us today to arrange for a **FREE** initial evaluation.